ENHANCING SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING IN ALBERTA

December 2003

REPORT

Alberta
LEARNING
Enhancing Second Language Learning Project

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The successful review of the capacity of the Alberta Learning system to enhance second language learning would not have been possible without the support and contributions of committee members, who generously shared their wisdom and experience. Committee members brought the perspectives of parents, teachers/instructors, administrators and Albertans interested in enhancing language learning in this province.

This report was the result of the collaborative effort of education and language stakeholders from both the basic and adult learning systems. A special note of appreciation is extended to the following stakeholder organizations for providing representatives to the various committees and working groups.

Alberta Home and School Councils' Association
Association of Independent Schools and Colleges in Alberta
Alberta School Boards Association
Alberta Teachers' Association
Association of School Business Officials of Alberta
College of Alberta School Superintendents

Universities Coordinating Council
Council of Presidents of Colleges and Technical Institutes
Council of Senior Academic Officials
Council of Vice-Presidents Academic
Faculties of Education:
- University of Alberta
- University of Calgary
- University of Lethbridge

Edmonton Chamber of Commerce
Canadian Parents for French
Northern Alberta Heritage Language Association
Southern Alberta Heritage Language Association

The Advisory Committee and working groups are to be commended for their commitment, hard work, wisdom, patience, expertise and guidance throughout the process.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Second languages are defined as languages other than English taught for purposes of developing communication skills and cultural understanding. Second languages include French as a second language, heritage languages, Aboriginal languages and international languages.

Alberta is a province rich in its linguistic and cultural heritage. In recognition of this diversity, Alberta school authorities offer a wide spectrum of second language courses and programs, depending upon the availability of qualified teachers, available curriculum (provincial, or locally-developed and approved) and support resources.

French, an official language in Canada, is a language used in Alberta communities as well as in countries across the world. All Alberta senior high school students have access to learning French as a second language, through courses (on-site or online) or through immersion programming.

Alberta Learning is committed to supporting second language learning by:

- encouraging school authorities in the basic learning system to offer opportunities for all students to learn French and languages other than English and French by making available:
  - alternative French language programs (includes French immersion) and French as a second language courses and related services
    (Policy 1.5.2 *French as a Second Language and French Language Immersion*)
  - language and culture courses and partial immersion (bilingual) programs (Policy 1.5.3 *Languages Other than French or English*)
- developing curriculum, as well as learner and teacher support resources, and determining standards for all provincial second language programs
- encouraging and reviewing locally developed language courses that meet unique community needs.

A number of Canadian provinces include second languages as a required component of student learning. In British Columbia, a second language is compulsory for all students in grades 5–8 except for certain students with special needs. In Ontario, French second language education is compulsory for all students in grades 4–8 and a course requirement in Grade 9. In Quebec, English as a Second Language (ESL) is compulsory from Grade 3 to the end of senior high school. French as a Second Language (FSL) is compulsory from Grade 1 to the end of senior high school in the English-speaking school system. In New Brunswick, FSL is compulsory for all students in grades 1–10. In Prince Edward Island, FSL is compulsory in grades 4–9, with some exceptions for students with special needs. In Nova Scotia, FSL, Mi'kmaq or Gaelic is compulsory in grades 4–9.

The percentage of Alberta senior high school students in Grade 10 through Grade 12 who completed second language courses dropped from 27.8% in 1994–1995 to 21.7% in 1998–1999.

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When this downward trend in enrollments became apparent during the 1999–2000 school year, Alberta Learning surveyed 29 school jurisdictions and held focus groups with principals representing both rural and urban areas. Administrators suggested a number of reasons for Alberta's low student participation rate.

- Senior high school students focus on earning high marks in core subjects. They have competing interests when it comes to the available option courses.
- Scheduling difficulties arise from attempts to offer a larger number of different secondary courses in a limited amount of instructional time.
- Complementary courses such as second languages are the first to feel the impact of pressures to focus on instruction in core subjects for which there are provincial achievement tests or diploma examinations.
- The current provincial funding structure does not encourage school jurisdictions and schools to support courses with low enrollments.
- Decreases in second language enrollments have occurred in small rural jurisdictions and small urban senior high schools because numbers are not sufficient and qualified staff is not available.

Given the importance of languages in the twenty-first century global society, too few senior high school students in Alberta enroll in and complete second language programs.

The adult learning system has an increase in second language course enrollments taken for credit. While there is an increase in enrollments in introductory second language courses in post-secondary institutions, fewer students are graduating with a second language major (concentration) or minor. The number of students enrolled in programs for teacher preparation in second languages remains insufficient to meet anticipated programming needs.

Second language speakers have an appreciation for diversity and better understand the contributions of different cultures and the interdependence of people throughout the world. In today's information-based, multilingual world, an individual who is proficient in two or more languages has greater employment opportunities.

The Government of Alberta recognizes the importance of second languages in preparing Albertans for participation in the global economy. Goal 6 of the *People and Prosperity* initiative indicates "Albertans will be able to make use of their learning and skills in the global economy." One target of the Alberta government's new economic strategy (Government of Alberta's News Release, *New Century Bold Plans* of February 8, 2000) is to "increase the proportion of students taking a second language from 25 percent to 33 percent" by 2005.

Alberta Learning approved the Enhancing Second Language Learning Project in May 2000. The goals of the Project were to:

- develop strategies to raise awareness of the benefits and opportunities of second language learning
- review the capacity of the provincial learning systems (basic and adult) to provide enhanced second language programming
- develop partnerships to enhance second language learning.

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The Enhancing Second Language Learning Project reviewed the capacity of the Alberta learning systems using a working group and advisory structure. Five working groups and advisory committees met from January to May 2001 to examine the various aspects of second language program delivery. A draft discussion document outlining recommendations and strategies developed through this process was provided to members of the Advisory Committee to Enhance Second Language Learning. The feedback from their respective organizations, including a number of identified challenges, was presented to the committee in *What We Heard About Enhancing Second Language Programming in Alberta* (Appendix E).

The Advisory Committee to Enhance Second Language Learning made 35 recommendations, first identifying priority recommendations, then organizing the remaining recommendations into topics and themes similar to those presented in the discussion document: programming/second language proficiency (themes: making the best of what we have, responding to globalization, access and learner assessment), teacher development, learner initiatives, raising public awareness and funding.

The Advisory Committee identified four **priority recommendations** (#1–4) that call for:

- a review of the Kindergarten to Grade 12 basic learning system
- a determination of the feasibility of making second languages a required part of each student's basic learning program
- a review by post-secondary institutions of their entrance and program requirements
- the exploration and implementation of strategies to increase the supply of qualified second language teachers/instructors who possess both target language proficiency, and are skilled in pedagogy specific to second language learning.

Additionally, Alberta Learning determined that developing public awareness and establishing a supportive environment is integral to enhancing language learning in Alberta. Thus, recommendation #31 was also made a priority. It calls for Alberta Learning to:

- explore the feasibility of implementing strategies that increase awareness of second language learning.

Programming/Second language proficiency recommendations (#5–23) were modified and combined into the following themes:

Making the best of what we have (recommendations #5–9), school authorities would continue to select second languages for their schools based on the available choice of provincial programs. Alberta Learning would continue to make second language programs available at the current multiple entry points and to provide resource supports for learners and teachers for each of the provincial second language programs, including distance learning materials. Secondary students would be encouraged to start and complete at least one second language program sequence in grades 10, 11 and 12 (e.g., French 30, French Language Arts 30/35, German 30, Spanish 30).

Responding to globalization (recommendations #10–12), Alberta Learning would explore offering programs in the languages of Alberta's principal trading partners: expanding current programs in languages such as French, German, Italian, Japanese and Spanish for secondary students, and exploring the feasibility of provincial program development for languages such as Mandarin and Portuguese. Learners would be encouraged to participate in study and exchange experiences in countries or regions where the second languages being learned are the principal languages of communication.

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There is currently an opportunity for *consolidation and integration* (recommendations #13–17) among the basic, adult and community learning sectors. Activities would include the collaboration of education partners at both basic and adult levels to define a set of proficiency levels; partnerships of schools and post-secondary institutions with parents, community, business and industry to offer language work experience placements for senior high and post-secondary students; and successful integration of technology into second language instruction.

Access (recommendation #18) to second language learning across the province may be expanded through alternate delivery modes. Exploration and implementation requires the collaboration of post-secondary institutions, Alberta Distance Learning Centre and education partners.

Learner assessment (recommendations #19–23) in the area of second languages may be enhanced through the development of provincial assessment standards and materials, and by defining proficiency levels that focus on oral, listening, reading and writing skills as well as cultural understanding. Post-secondary institutions, business and industry could collaborate to develop a second language portfolio program and an assessment service to evaluate and recognize students' second language knowledge and skills.

Recommendations regarding teacher development (#24–25) confirm it is important that second language teachers possess advanced proficiency in the language they teach, and that administrators understand and appreciate the language learning process and the cultures being taught. The Committee recognized that professional growth is encouraged through exploration of strategies to assist teachers within the basic learning system to develop and maintain both second language proficiency and pedagogy.

Recommendations regarding learner initiatives (#26–30) focus on encouraging students to learn additional languages, professional development, community-level language learning opportunities and the provision of incentives for school authorities and post-secondary institutions to implement second language courses and programs.

Recommendations regarding funding (#32–35) are based on the principles of learner focus, adequacy, equity, simplicity, accountability, accessibility and flexibility, and would focus on the areas of teacher, program and learner development. The Committee recognized that new funding would be required in order to achieve long-term goals related to enhanced second language programming.

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BACKGROUND TO THE REVIEW

1. ALBERTA—A PROVINCE OF LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY

Canada is a multicultural country with two official languages. Both English and French, as well as the languages of our First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples and more recent heritage languages, are important components of our Alberta community.

In the last census (1996), Albertans declared a variety of languages as a mother tongue. These languages assist Alberta families and communities in maintaining positive relationships and in transmitting values, advice and traditions to their children. In Aboriginal communities, language retention and development is fundamental to the survival of First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples.

In the 1996 census, 2% (55 300) of the Alberta population declared French as a mother tongue, while only 0.7% (17 800) indicated that French is the language used in their home. When Albertans declared their mother tongue, 16.4% indicated a language other than English or French; only half of these (8.2%) declared such languages to be the means of communication in their home. Of the 27 570 Albertans who declared an Aboriginal mother tongue, 60% speak the language in their home. The 1996 census noted that 1.3% of Albertans are unable to speak either official language.

English is the predominant language in Alberta homes, even in those where it is not the mother tongue.

2. SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING IN ALBERTA

Alberta Learning encourages opportunities for Alberta students to learn languages by making available second language courses and programs, alternative French language programs (includes French immersion) and bilingual programs and related services (Policies 1.5.2 and 1.5.3, Appendix A).

Second language learners are considered to:

- better understand the contributions of different cultures
- possess enhanced language skills in general, including improved first language skills
- appreciate diversity
- develop an understanding of the interdependence of people throughout the world, including the nature and role of language and culture
- are able to communicate in a variety of travel, leisure and job-related contexts in Alberta, in Canada and in many countries of the world.

The value of fluency in a second or third language is seldom disputed. Advanced skill levels in another language are attributed to only a small proportion of the North American population. English is the dominant language.

Individual Albertans currently learn, acquire or maintain second language skills and proficiencies (Appendix B) in a variety of settings as children or adults.

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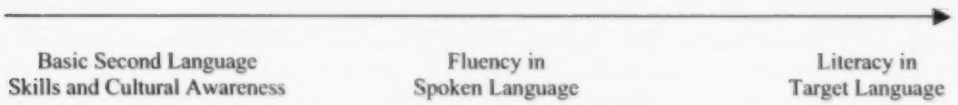
Young Albertans may:

- enroll in courses offered in the basic learning (K–12) system
- pursue language instruction offered through available community heritage language associations (Respondents to an Alberta Learning telephone/fax poll reported offering instruction in 23 languages to some 8740 students ranging in age from 3 to adult. Many of the respondents belong to the Northern and Southern Alberta Language Associations. These associations report offering instruction in approximately 40 languages to some 14 000 students.)
- learn language skills through family and in other informal settings.

Adult learners in Alberta may:

- enroll in second language credit courses/programs in post-secondary institutions
- pursue non-credit courses in various settings (e.g., post-secondary institutions, continuing education programs, community associations, private language schools or tutors)
- study a second language through employer-sponsored programs (e.g., Government of Canada, language courses for Telus employees through the Faculté St Jean).

Language learning may be visualized as a continuum.



Literacy skills in any language are developed and maintained throughout the learner's lifetime.

A number of factors influence the development of fluency/skills that may be achieved. These factors include:

- type of program (second language or immersion)
- continuity of instruction
- linguistic distance of the language being learned from English (or from the learner's mother tongue)
- exposure to the target language.

3. LANGUAGE PROGRAMMING IN THE BASIC LEARNING SYSTEM

In the basic learning system:

- French is taught as a second language through French as a Second Language courses and alternative French language programs (includes French immersion)
- Aboriginal languages (languages of First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples) that are taught include Cree, Blackfoot, Dene, Nakoda, Ojibway, South Slavey and Inuktitut
- International language instruction is offered in languages such as German, Japanese, Mandarin, Spanish and Ukrainian.

Alberta Learning makes provincial second language programs/courses available at multiple entry points (Kindergarten, grades 1, 4, 7 and 10 levels) within the basic learning system to meet diverse language learning needs across the province (Table 1).

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Table 1
Provincial Second Language Programs
Elementary, Junior High and Senior High School Levels

Elementary (K to Grade 6)	Grades 7 to 9	Grades 10 to 12
Blackfoot	Blackfoot	Blackfoot
Cree	Cree	Cree
French language arts	French language arts	French language arts
French as a second language	French as a second language	French as a second language
	German	German
		Italian
		Japanese
		Latin
		Spanish
Ukrainian language arts	Ukrainian language arts	Ukrainian language arts
	Ukrainian as a second language	Ukrainian as a second language

Each of these programs (second language, immersion and bilingual, and partial-immersion) has a different focus and varied learner expectations.

- alternative French language programs, which help students to develop functional fluency in French, begin in Kindergarten or Grade 1 (immersion), and in some cases, Grade 7 (late immersion).
- Bilingual programs that aim to develop an advanced level of proficiency begin in Kindergarten or Grade 1.
- Second language courses and programs (including French as a Second Language) at various grade levels provide students with basic skills and cultural understanding.

School authorities select second language programs at the local level based on considerations such as:

- community demand
- the number of potential students
- the importance of the language at the community, national and international levels
- the availability of qualified teachers/instructors
- the availability of appropriate curriculum and learning resources.

To meet unique community needs, locally developed courses and programs are offered, subject to provincial review and approval. These courses include languages such as Arabic, Blackfoot, Cree, German, Greek, Hebrew, Hungarian, Japanese, Chinese (Cantonese), Chinese (Mandarin), Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Russian, Spanish, Stoney and Swedish.

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In Alberta most second language programs/courses are available at the senior high school level, delivered through either onsite instruction or online learning. Alberta senior high school students currently have access to a variety of second language courses (e.g., in the 2000–2001 school year, students in grades 10–12 completed second language courses in some 20 languages). Second language programs are not as widely available at the junior high school and elementary school levels.

(a) Student participation in the basic learning system has been decreasing in recent years

The percentage of senior high school students (grades 10 through 12) who completed second language courses dropped from 27.8% in 1994–1995 to 21.7% in 1998–1999.

Senior high school course completion data in recent years demonstrates this trend. In 1995–1996, there were 42 575 senior high school second language course completions. By the year 2000–2001, senior high school second language course completions declined to 38 309.

When this downward trend in enrollments became apparent during the 1999–2000 school year, Alberta Learning surveyed 29 school jurisdictions and held focus groups with principals representing both rural and urban areas. Participating administrators suggested several reasons for Alberta's low student participation rate in second language learning, including the following.

- Senior high school students have competing interests: with more courses to choose from, some other course options may be more appealing than second languages.
- Senior high school students seem to be primarily focused on earning high marks in core subjects. Since second languages are optional from Kindergarten to Grade 12, and not required for senior high school graduation or entrance to post-secondary studies, students emphasize core subjects.
- Scheduling difficulties arise from attempts to offer a larger number of secondary courses in a limited amount of instructional time.
- The majority of available instructional time is given to the core subjects, which have provincial achievement tests or diploma examinations. Administrators suggest that, under such pressures, complementary courses such as second languages feel the impact first.
- The current funding structure offers little encouragement to school jurisdictions and schools to support courses with low enrollments.
- Funding was identified as a major challenge in the provision of second language programs.
- Decreases in second language enrollment have occurred in small rural jurisdictions and small urban senior high schools because numbers are not sufficient and qualified staff is not available.

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4. ADULT LEARNING

In the adult learning system, post-secondary institutions offer both credit and non-credit courses in a variety of second languages. Each post-secondary institution determines the programming it offers based on a variety of factors, including student needs, community needs and availability of qualified instructors and resources.

Post-secondary institutions meet a variety of student needs in second languages. These needs include university transfer requirements, language other than English requirements (for a specific program or faculty), cultural and linguistic needs and career preparation needs. Students have the opportunity to develop intermediate or advanced level skills in the languages they study, as well as an awareness of the major issues in the world of the target language.

Alberta's colleges, universities and technical institutes offer courses for credit in more than 20 languages (Appendix C), including Arabic, Blackfoot, Chinese (Mandarin), Cree, Danish, Dutch, French, German, Greek (classical), Hebrew (classical), Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Latin, Norwegian, Persian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Sanskrit, Spanish, Swedish, Literary Tibetan and Ukrainian.

Post-secondary institutions develop partnerships to offer courses, develop ties with local cultural communities that provide funding and prizes, and establish links with other universities for study abroad and exchanges in specific languages. Language departments cooperate with educators within local school authorities to promote second languages. A variety of promotional activities are currently undertaken (e.g., visits to schools, brochures, "word of mouth," Internet, career fairs, "open houses," student clubs and participation by instructors in community and professional associations). Post-secondary institutions are responding to adult learners' requests for additional second language offerings.

(a) Student participation in the adult learning system

An Alberta Learning study (*Second Language Learning for Adults—Credit Courses and Programs in Alberta's Colleges and Universities, 2001*) conducted during the 2000–2001 academic year provided information about second language credit courses and programs in Alberta's post-secondary institutions (colleges, universities and technical institutes).

Thirteen of Alberta's twenty-five public post-secondary institutions offer second language courses for credit, with 14 651 enrollments in second language credit courses recorded for the 1999–2000 academic year. This figure shows an increase of approximately 25% from 1994–1995 to 1999–2000, when 11 668 second language credit course enrollments were recorded.

There was a significant increase in Spanish enrollments—1636 in 1994–1995 to 3703 in 1999–2000—an increase of 2067. The popularity of Spanish has been attributed to several factors: greater student awareness of internationalization, in particular the North American Trade Agreement; student discovery of the enjoyment of Latin culture; potential job opportunities with Spanish; and perceived ease of learning Spanish.

Currently, most students who enroll in second language credit courses at the post-secondary level, especially in the university setting, have not studied a second language in senior high school. Universities have met the challenge of providing increased introductory-level instruction within a post-secondary setting.

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However, university language departments and education faculties note while there is an increase in enrollments in these introductory second language courses, fewer students are graduating with a second language major (concentration) or minor.

The number of students enrolled in teacher preparation programs with a language major/minor or focus on a second language continues to be insufficient to meet anticipated second language programming needs.

5. SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING FOR ECONOMIC REASONS

Albertans live and work in a multilingual world. One in three Albertans earns a living through international trade (*A Framework for Alberta's International Strategies*, February 2000). After the United States, Alberta's top trading partners include Japan, China, South Korea, Mexico, Taiwan, United Kingdom, Italy, Iran and Germany. In many of these countries, languages other than English or French are the principal languages of communication. Alberta also welcomes visitors, business people and investors who speak many different languages. Individuals who possess fluency in a second language, in addition to knowledge in an area of specialization, such as technology, science or theatre, have many more employment opportunities.

The Government of Alberta recognizes the importance of second language learning in preparing Albertans for participation in the global economy. Goal 6 of the *People and Prosperity* initiative indicates "Albertans will be able to make use of their learning and skills in the global economy." One target of the Alberta government's new economic strategy (Government of Alberta's News Release, *New Century Bold Plans* of February 8, 2000) is to "increase the proportion of students taking a second language to 25 percent by 2003, and 33 percent by 2005."

6. THE ENHANCING SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING PROJECT

It is with this background that Alberta Learning approved the Enhancing Second Language Learning Project in May 2000. The goals of the Project were to:

- develop strategies to raise awareness of the benefits and opportunities of second language learning
- review the capacity of the provincial learning systems (adult and basic) to provide enhanced second language programming
- develop partnerships to enhance second language learning.

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THE REVIEW

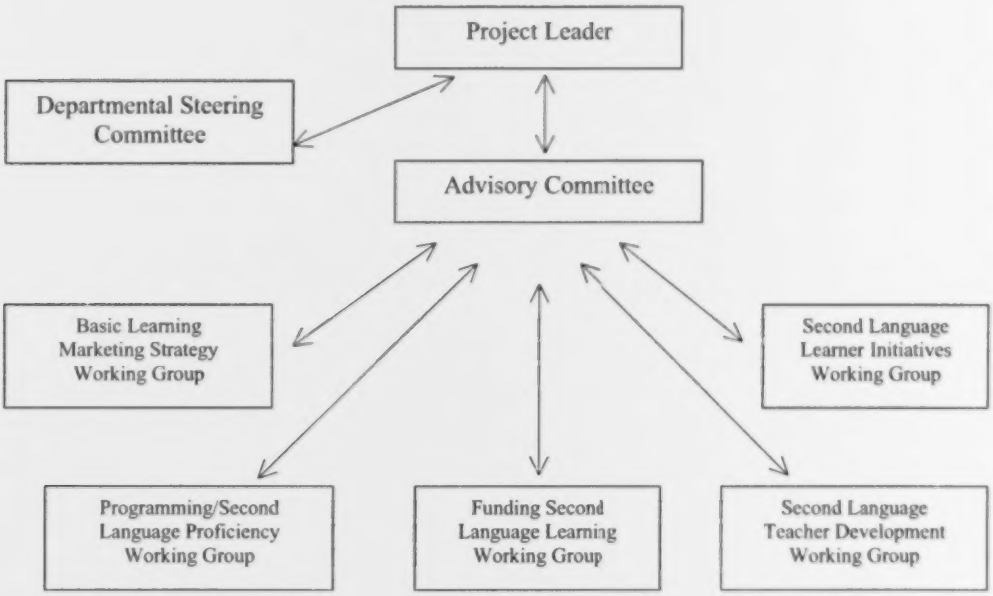
1. THE REVIEW STRUCTURE

The Enhancing Second Language Learning Project reviewed the capacity of the Alberta Learning systems (adult and basic) using a working group/advisory structure (see Appendix D).

Five working groups, consisting of both internal Alberta Learning staff and external (partners/stakeholders) members, met from January to June 2001 to address the challenges and opportunities in second language programming. The working groups examined the various aspects of second language program delivery that might enhance second language learning for students in the basic and adult learning systems in Alberta. Each working group had a specific focus: programming/second language proficiency, teacher development, learner initiatives, marketing and funding.

Advice was provided by a Departmental Steering Committee that consisted of members from branches of Alberta Learning who are involved in second language programming and delivery. The Advisory Committee to Enhance Second Language Learning, consisting of representatives of basic and adult learning partner organizations, language stakeholders and business, guided the development of the strategies and recommendations.

The Enhancing Second Language Learning Project working group/advisory committee structure can be summarized as follows:


Project Leader
Departmental Steering Committee
Advisory Committee
Basic Learning Marketing Strategy Working Group
Second Language Learner Initiatives Working Group
Programming/Second Language Proficiency Working Group
Funding Second Language Learning Working Group
Second Language Teacher Development Working Group

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2. THE REVIEW PROCESS

The working group/advisory committee process resulted in a draft discussion document, *Enhancing Second Language Programming in Alberta,* which provided contextual information, recommendations and strategies in five focus areas: programming/second language proficiency, teacher development, learner initiatives, marketing, and funding, as well as a discussion of opportunities and challenges related to enhancing second language learning in Alberta.

Working Group members, in addition to providing input on their respective sections of the draft discussion document, were provided a copy of the draft discussion document and asked to ensure that it reflected their group's discussions accurately.

The Departmental Steering Committee reviewed this document with their respective branches/sectors/ divisions and provided input with regard to the implications of the recommendations.

The Advisory Committee members obtained feedback from the organizations they represent:

Basic Learning Partners:	Alberta School Boards Association College of Alberta School Superintendents Alberta Teachers' Association Alberta Home and School Councils' Association
Adult Learning Partners:	Universities Coordinating Council Council of Presidents of Colleges and Technical Institutes
Second Language Stakeholders:	Canadian Parents for French Northern Alberta Heritage Language Association Southern Alberta Heritage Language Association
Business:	Edmonton Chamber of Commerce

The feedback to the draft discussion document was described in *What We Heard About Enhancing Second Language Programming in Alberta* (see Appendix E). This document, produced by an independent consultant, discusses the feedback to the recommendations (organized by focus/theme) and provides a synopsis of the emerging challenges.

The Advisory Committee met to examine the recommendations in light of feedback received. The Committee considered *What We Heard About Enhancing Second Language Programming in Alberta*, as well as suggestions from Edmonton Public Schools, motions from the French Immersion Programming Advisory Committee, correspondence from Northern Alberta Heritage Language Association/Southern Alberta Heritage Language Association and input from the Departmental Steering Committee.

The Advisory Committee proposed 35 recommendations for enhancing second language programming.

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THE RECOMMENDATIONS

1. DEVELOPMENT OF THEMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The 35 recommendations of the Advisory Committee to Enhance Second Language Learning maintain the organization of the draft discussion document with respect to the focus areas and themes. The input on the themes, initially presented in the discussion paper, was thoughtfully examined. Some recommendations were modified or combined.

2. OVERVIEW OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The Advisory Committee made 35 recommendations. The first four recommendations were deemed by the Advisory Committee to be priority recommendations, key to the success of any initiatives in this area. Additionally, Alberta Learning determined that developing public awareness and establishing a supportive environment is integral to enhancing language learning in Alberta. Thus, Recommendation #31 was also made a priority.

The priority recommendations are that:

- Alberta Learning, in the short term, review the Kindergarten to Grade 12 basic learning program.
- Further to 1, this review shall include an examination of the feasibility of making a second language a required part of each student's basic learning program. This shall include a review of the instructional time allocation.
- Further to 1 and 2, post-secondary institutions review entrance and program requirements for languages other than English with the view to prepare more adults able to communicate and participate in the multilingual global society.
- Alberta Learning explore and implement strategies to increase the supply of qualified second language teachers who possess both target language proficiency, and are skilled in pedagogy specific to second language learning.
- Alberta Learning, in collaboration with education partners and other stakeholders, continue to explore the feasibility of implementing strategies that create an awareness of, and supportive environment for, second language learning.

The 35 recommendations are that:

1. Alberta Learning, in the short term, review the Kindergarten to Grade 12 basic learning program.
2. Further to 1, this review shall include an examination of the feasibility of making a second language a required part of each student's basic learning program. This shall include a review of the instructional time allocation.
3. Further to 1 and 2, post-secondary institutions review entrance and program requirements for languages other than English with the view to prepare more adults able to communicate and participate in the multilingual global society.
4. Alberta Learning explore and implement strategies to increase the supply of qualified second language teachers who possess both target language proficiency, and are skilled in pedagogy specific to second language learning.
5. At the basic learning level, school authorities continue to select second languages for their schools based on the available choice of provincial programs.
6. Alberta Learning and school authorities encourage secondary students to start and complete at least one second language sequence in grades 10, 11 and 12 (e.g., French 30, French Language Arts 30, German 30, Spanish 30).

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7. Alberta Learning continue to make second language programs available in the current multiple entry points: Kindergarten, grades 1, 4, 7, 10 and post-secondary levels.
8. At the basic learning level, students who wish to pursue an advanced level of proficiency in a second language, or higher level, be encouraged to enroll in partial immersion or full immersion programs in the second language, if these programs are available.
9. Alberta Learning will cause to be developed needed resource supports, including distance learning materials, and provide implementation support for each second language program.
10. Alberta Learning develop:
    - support resources for three-year provincial programs of study (grades 10–12); e.g., Mandarin by 2005, Portuguese by 2010
    - distance learning materials in such languages as Cree, German, Japanese, Mandarin, Spanish, Ukrainian (three-year programs) and French (four-year program) for grades 10–12
    - new six-year programs of study (grades 7–12) by 2005, and support resources for Spanish, Mandarin, German, Japanese, Italian and Portuguese by 2010.
11. Alberta Learning, school authorities and post-secondary institutions encourage both basic and adult learners to participate in study and exchange experiences in countries or regions where the second languages being learned are the principal languages of communication.
12. Alberta Learning and post-secondary institutions offer course credits to students who participate in long-term cultural and linguistic exchanges and study experiences in countries or regions where the second languages are principal languages of communication.
13. Alberta Learning, in cooperation with post-secondary institutions and stakeholders such as business, industry and community, define a set of proficiency levels appropriate to each language program offered.
14. Teachers integrate technology into instruction to increase interaction with different speakers of the target languages and to enrich classroom instruction.
15. Alberta Learning develop a curriculum framework in cooperation with the community language associations to support second language learning in international language programs offered at the community level.
16. Alberta Learning encourage school authorities and post-secondary institutions to form partnerships with parents, community, business and industry to enhance second language learning.
17. Alberta Government encourage employers using different languages to provide work experience placements for senior high school and post-secondary students.
18. Alberta Learning, in consultation with post-secondary institutions, Alberta Distance Learning Centre, and education stakeholders expand access to alternative delivery modes in support of second language learning (e.g., distance learning/online delivery, language camps).
19. Alberta Learning acquire, adapt or cause to be developed assessment standards and materials (e.g., sample model tests) for the proficiency levels of the provincial second language programs, emphasizing oral, listening, reading and writing skills, and cultural understanding.
20. Alberta Learning in partnership with post-secondary institutions, business and industry support a second language portfolio program.
21. Alberta Learning award, by 2010, language certificates to students successfully completing specific target levels of language proficiency in basic learning.
22. Alberta Learning ensure an assessment service to evaluate and to recognize students' language knowledge and skills learned outside the formal instructional setting.
23. Alberta Learning review, by 2003, the course challenge provision at the senior high school level to ensure that students are encouraged to continue their second language learning in each of grades 10, 11 and 12, in order to maintain or improve proficiency.

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24. Under normal circumstances second language teachers will possess advanced proficiency in the language in question. School authorities encourage school-based administrators supervising language programs to have an understanding and appreciation of the language learning and culture(s) being taught.
25. Alberta Learning, in collaboration with education partners (the Alberta Teachers' Association, the College of Alberta School Superintendents, and Alberta's universities) investigate potential strategies that would:
    - encourage teachers within the basic learning system to develop and maintain second language proficiency and second language pedagogical knowledge and skills; and
    - enhance positive collaboration and professional growth in the province.
26. New programs be provided to encourage students in basic and adult learning levels to learn one or more second languages (e.g., bursaries, scholarships, exchange programs). Existing scholarship programs be reviewed to determine their relationship to proficiency levels.
27. Funds be provided to community language associations to develop second language learning opportunities offered in the evenings and on weekends.
28. Programs be provided to assist language instructors at the community level to continue to improve their second language pedagogical knowledge and skills.
29. Programs be provided to encourage practicing teachers to develop and/or maintain their second language proficiency and second language pedagogy.
30. Programs be provided on an equitable basis to assist school authorities, post-secondary institutions and community associations with additional costs associated with innovative projects at the basic and adult learning levels.
31. Alberta Learning, in collaboration with education partners and other stakeholders, continue to explore the feasibility of implementing strategies that create an awareness of, and supportive environment for, second language learning.
32. New permanent provincial funding, over and above the basic instructional grant, be provided for second language learning based on the principles of learner focus, adequacy, equity, simplicity, accountability, accessibility and flexibility.
33. New provincial funding be provided to assist with the additional costs of program, assessment and distance learning development in Kindergarten to Grade 12, second language projects, initial implementation costs in Kindergarten to Grade 12, education consortia, and research and evaluation in second languages.
34. New provincial funding be provided to assist with additional costs of post-secondary second language credit programs and teacher development programs (e.g., teacher bursaries and ACCESS fund).
35. New provincial funding be provided to assist with additional costs of second language learner development (e.g., bursaries, fellowships, student exchanges).

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CONCLUDING COMMENTS: HOW WE WILL KNOW WHEN WE HAVE ARRIVED

Enhanced second language programming in Alberta depends on a number of factors: availability of qualified teachers (proficient in the language and with second language pedagogy skills), available provincial curriculum and teacher/learner support resources, supportive policies, positive stakeholder support and the cooperation of education partners and stakeholders.

Alberta Learning, education partners, post-secondary institutions, parents, community, business and industry each have a role in nurturing second language learning in Alberta.

Alberta Learning provides:

- curriculum, as well as teacher and learner support resources, for each provincial language program
- leadership and coordination in the development of a Second Language Proficiency Framework.

Local school authorities and post-secondary institutions:

- implement supportive language policies
- ensure sufficient instruction time in second language programs
- develop strategies to attract, prepare and retain sufficient qualified teachers/instructors.

Administrators:

- have an understanding of second language learning and an appreciation of the target language culture
- support second language learning within their school/post-secondary institution.

Teachers/instructors of languages in the basic and adult learning systems:

- possess both second language proficiency and pedagogy specific to second language learning
- deliver effective instruction to students in the basic and adult systems
- collaboratively create an active, collegial environment for professional growth.

Positive stakeholder support:

- leads to the establishment of partnerships to support second language learning (e.g., the basic and adult learning systems could form partnerships with business, industry, community language associations and other stakeholders).

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A "well-informed" public:

- recognizes that Albertans' ability to understand and speak two or more languages is an important asset in the twenty-first century
- understands proficiency and skills that learners may realistically achieve through second language programming.

The involvement and support of second language learning by school authorities, post-secondary institutions, educators, parents, students and the broader community will create an environment supportive of second language learning.

In such an environment, Alberta learners will successfully use second languages to:

- participate in face-to-face interactions with members of other linguistic communities
- understand the way of life, economy, history and contributions of other linguistic communities
- access knowledge and information generated by other countries and cultures
- communicate in work, leisure and travel activities.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Second Language Policies in Alberta

Appendix B: Example Levels of Language Proficiency

Appendix C: Post-secondary Second Language Courses for Credit Purposes

Appendix D: Committees and Working Groups Terms of Reference/Focus

Appendix E: *What We Heard About Enhancing Second Language Programming in Alberta*

Policy 1.5.2

Education Programs and Services

French as a Second Language and French Language Immersion

BACKGROUND

Since French is one of Canada's two official languages, many parents want their children to have opportunities to learn French. Learning French is considered important both to enhance opportunities for living and working throughout Canada and the world as well as to foster a greater understanding between French-speaking and English-speaking Canadians.

POLICY

Alberta Learning encourages opportunities for all Alberta students to learn French by making available French immersion programs, French second language courses and related services.

STATUTE

School Act

Language of Instruction – English

9 Every student is entitled to receive school instruction in English.

Other languages of instruction

11 (1) A board may authorize the use of French or any other language as a language of instruction.

(2) The Minister may make regulations governing the provision of instruction in any language authorized under subsection (1).

Alternative programs

21 (1) In this section, "alternative program" means an education program that

(a) emphasizes a particular language, culture, religion or subject-matter, or

(b) uses a particular teaching philosophy,

but that is not a special education program,a program referred to in section 10, or a program of religious education offered by a separate school board.

(2) If a board determines that there is sufficient demand for a particular alternative program, the board may offer that program to those students whose parents enroll them in the program.

(3) A board that offers an alternative program shall continue to offer the regular education program to those students whose parents do not enroll them in the alternative program.

(4) If a parent enrolls a student in an alternative program, the board may charge that parent fees for the purpose of defraying all or a portion of any non-instructional costs that

(a) may be incurred by the board in offering the alternative program, and

(b) are in addition to the costs incurred by the board in providing its regular education program.

ADDITIONAL DEFINITIONS

In this policy,

1 "*Act*" means the *School Act*;

2 "French as a second language courses" means courses approved by the Minister in which the French language is studied as a subject for the purpose of developing communication skills and cultural understanding; and

3 "French Immersion Program" means a program in which French is used as the language of instruction in accordance with sections 8, 9, 11 and 21 of the **Act** but does not include school instruction in French under section 10 of the **Act**.

PROCEDURES

1 Boards have the responsibility of deciding the amount of time needed in all subject areas from Kindergarten to grade 9. In grades 10-12, instructional time is 25 hours per credit. Recommended instructional times are specified in the *Guide to Education: ECS to Grade 12*.

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2 In offering a French Immersion Program, boards must ensure that students have the opportunity to acquire competence in all English language arts skills needed to meet graduation requirements.

3 Boards offering a French immersion program and/or French as a second language courses shall develop, keep current and implement written policy and procedures consistent with provincial policies and procedures.

4 Funds available from the Government of Canada in support of instruction in French immersion programs and/or French as a second language courses shall be distributed by Alberta Learning as specified annually in the *Funding Manual for School Authorities.*

5 In consultation with boards or eligible agencies, Alberta Learning shall determine priorities and develop specifications for boards or organizations wishing to access cost-shared Government of Canada funds for initiating or expanding instructional programs and services.

REFERENCES

Please refer to the current editions of the following for additional information:

Guide to Education: ECS to Grade 12

Handbook for French Immersion Administrators

Language Education Policy for Alberta

Yes, You Can Help - A Guide for French Immersion Parents

Funding Manual for School Authorities

See Section 7 of the *Policy, Regulations and Forms Manual* for information on where the above document(s) may be obtained, and for Department / Branch addresses and phone and fax numbers.

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Education Programs and Services
Languages Other Than French or English

BACKGROUND

Many parents want their children to have opportunities to learn other languages in view of the personal, social and economic values associated with learning a variety of languages, the Alberta government's human resource development strategy which encourages students to learn a variety of languages, and Canada's heritage.

POLICY

Alberta Learning encourages opportunities for all Alberta students to learn languages other than English or French, by making available second language courses and partial immersion (bilingual) programs and related services.

STATUTE

School Act

Preamble

WHEREAS the education community in making decisions should consider the diverse nature and heritage of society in Alberta within the context of its common values and beliefs.

Language of Instruction – English

9 Every student is entitled to receive school instruction in English.

Other languages of instruction

11 (1) A board may authorize the use of French or any other language as a language of instruction.

(2) The Minister may make regulations governing the provision of instruction in any language authorized under subsection (1).

Alternative programs

21 (1) In this section, "alternative program" means an education program that

(a) emphasizes a particular language, culture, religion or subject-matter, or

(b) uses a particular teaching philosophy,

but that is not a special education program, a program referred to in section 10, or a program of religious education offered by a separate school board.

(2) If a board determines that there is sufficient demand for a particular alternative program, the board may offer that program to those students whose parents enroll them in the program.

(3) A board that offers an alternative program shall continue to offer the regular education program to those students whose parents do not enroll them in the alternative program.

(4) If a parent enrolls a student in an alternative program, the board may charge that parent fees for the purpose of defraying all or a portion of any non-instructional costs that

(a) may be incurred by the board in offering the alternative program, and

(b) are in addition to the costs incurred by the board in providing its regular education program.

ADDITIONAL DEFINITIONS

In this policy,

1 "**Act**" means the **School Act**;

2 "partial immersion (bilingual) program" means a program in which a language other than English or French is used as the language of instruction, to a maximum of 50 per cent of the instructional day.

3 "second language course" means a course in which the second language is studied as a subject for the purpose of developing communication skills and cultural awareness.

PROCEDURES

1 In offering a partial immersion (bilingual) program, boards must ensure that students also have opportunity to acquire competence in all English language arts skills to meet graduation requirements.

2 Boards have the responsibility of deciding the amount of time needed in all subject areas from kindergarten to grade 12, providing the instructional time is consistent with the direction of the *Guide to Education: ECS to Grade 12*.

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REFERENCES

Please refer to the current editions of the following for additional information:

Guide to Education: ECS to Grade 12

Language Education Policy for Alberta

See Section 7 of the *Policy, Regulations and Forms Manual* for information on where the above document(s) may be obtained and for Department Branch addresses and phone and fax numbers.

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APPENDIX B: EXAMPLE LEVELS OF LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

This section will provide example descriptions of levels of language proficiency. The first set of examples represents a draft that incorporates elements from levels developed by the Public Service Commission of Canada, the Council of Europe and the American Council of Foreign Language Teachers. This example emphasizes tasks that may be part of an employment situation. These levels are called **Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced** and **Proficient.**

American Council of Foreign Language Teachers Levels

BEGINNING	INTERMEDIATE
At the end of the **Beginning** level, a learner will be able to: • understand and use familiar everyday expressions and basic phrases to satisfy concrete needs (e.g., very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment) • interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help • introduce him/herself and others • ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has • describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters of immediate need • give and follow simple instructions • make requests and respond to simple requests • identify and observe tangible products of the culture • use appropriate gestures and oral expressions for greetings, leaving takings and so on • identify commonly occurring cognates in the language they are learning • read simple forms and instructions • scan texts to pick out specific information such as dates, numbers, names • write short notes and messages giving simple information • fill out a simple form • use models of form letters to deal with routine situations by filling in words or slightly adapting content.	At the end of the **Intermediate** level, a learner will be able to: • understand announcements and messages connected to daily activities in the target culture • describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions, and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans • examine selected practices from the target cultures and his/her own (holidays, celebrations, work habits) • interact with members of the local community to hear how they use the language in their various fields of work • exchange information about topics of personal interest • read memos, notices or information on familiar matters • prepare short, routine correspondence to request or give information, explanations or instructions • write brief reports to explain or request that action be taken on work-related matters • write an e-mail • fill in forms where brief descriptions and comments are required • adapt texts such as model letters by adding a few words or slightly modifying the content • handle requests for routine information • give and follow instructions about how work is to be done, what information is needed and what steps or alternatives are to be followed.

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ADVANCED	PROFICIENT
At the end of the **Advanced** level, a learner will be able to: • demonstrate an understanding of the main ideas and significant details of live and recorded discussions, lectures, and presentations on current or past events from the target culture • interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party • produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options • discuss, orally or in writing, current or past events that are of significance in the target culture or that are being studied in another subject • develop and propose solutions to issues and problems that are of concern to members of their own and the target cultures through group work • understand the principal elements of non-fiction articles in newspapers, magazines and e-mail on topics of current and historical importance to members of the culture • write a letter or article describing and analyzing an issue • identify, discuss and analyze intangible products of the target culture, such as social, economic and political institutions, and explore relationships among these institutions and the perspectives of the culture • explore the relationships among the products, practices and perspectives of the culture • write texts in which the ideas are developed and presented in a coherent manner • support opinions, understand and express hypothetical and conditional ideas • give and understand explanations and descriptions which may involve complicated details, hypothetical questions or complex and abstract ideas • give and understand detailed accounts of events, actions taken or procedures to be followed • write observations or present conclusions summarizing a text or a meeting in point or note form • use various media from the language and culture for entertainment • read reports, articles or other documents to get a general idea of the content or to extract specific details required for a project.	At the end of the **Proficient** level, a learner will be able to: • exchange, support and discuss their opinions and individual perspectives with peers and/or speakers of the target language on a variety of topics dealing with contemporary and historical issues • understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts and recognize implicit meaning • express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions • use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes • produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organizational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices • summarize information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation • demonstrate an understanding of the cultural nuances of meaning in written and spoken language as expressed by speakers of the target language and in formal and informal settings • understand cultural nuances of meanings in expressive products of the culture, including selections from various literary genres and the visual arts • identify and analyze cultural perspectives as reflected in a variety of literary genres • read and/or use various media from the target language and culture for leisure and personal growth • establish and/or maintain interpersonal relations with speakers of the target language • read policy papers, research or technical reports, correspondence or other documents in order to assess implications, provide comments or make recommendations • understand complex details, inferences and fine points of meaning • draft short reports, research papers or summaries on particular work-related topics • participate in discussions that involve a rapid exchange of ideas • support opinions, defend a point of view, or justify actions in meetings or discussions • make presentations on complex topics.

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Public Service Commission of Canada Levels

The following adaptation of the Public Service Commission of Canada levels of proficiency is provided as another example of language proficiency levels.

❒ ***Reading***

BEGINNING LEVEL	INTERMEDIATE LEVEL	ADVANCED LEVEL
Beginning Level is the minimum level of second language ability in reading that should be identified for positions that require the comprehension of texts on topics of limited scope. A person reading at this level can fully understand very simple texts and grasp the main idea of texts about familiar topics. In addition, elementary points of information from relatively more complex texts, such as dates, numbers or names, can be read and understood in order to perform routine job-related tasks. A person at this level would not be expected to read and understand detailed information. Examples of some tasks which can be performed at the Beginning Level of reading are as follows: • looking over letters, memos, or forms in order to file or distribute them • scanning various texts to pick out specific elements of information (e.g., dates, numbers, names) • reading forms such as requisitions, work orders and invoices in order to process them • scanning listings, indexes or computer printouts in order to compile information or note changes.	**Intermediate Level** is the minimum level of second language ability in reading that should be identified for positions that require comprehension of most descriptive or factual material on work-related subjects. A person reading at this level can grasp the main idea of most work-related texts, locate specific details and distinguish main from subsidiary ideas. However, reading texts using complex grammar and less common vocabulary would cause difficulty. Examples of some tasks which can be performed at the Intermediate Level of reading are as follows: • reading reference materials to extract information required for the job • reading reports, articles or other documents to get a general idea of the content or to extract specific details required for the job • reading memos, notices or information bulletins on work-related matters • reading incoming correspondence to select or take note of items requiring action • reading documentation, reports or other work prepared by employees to verify that the content is correct and complete.	**Advanced Level** is the minimum level of second language ability in reading that should be identified for positions requiring the comprehension of texts dealing with a wide variety of work-related topics. At this level, most complex details, inferences and fine points of meaning are understood. Specialized or less familiar material can also be read with good comprehension. Some seldom-used expressions may be missed, however, and there may be some difficulty with very complex grammatical structures. Examples of some tasks which can be performed at the Advanced Level of reading are as follows: • reading policy papers, research or technical reports, correspondence or other documents in order to assess implications, provide comments or make recommendations • skimming books, articles and reports in order to have an overview of the content • reviewing correspondence or other texts prepared by an employee to verify that meaning and tone are appropriate • reviewing contracts or specifications for completeness and accuracy • analyzing and interpreting files and regulations to determine appropriate actions.

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❒ *Writing*

BEGINNING LEVEL	INTERMEDIATE LEVEL	ADVANCED LEVEL
Beginning Level is the minimum level of second language ability in writing that should be identified for positions that involve writing very limited units of information in the second language. A person writing at this level may write isolated words, phrases, simple statements or questions on very familiar topics using vocabulary related to time, place or person. Errors of grammar, vocabulary and spelling are to be expected and tolerated as long as the message is understandable. Examples of some tasks which can be performed at the Beginning Level of writing are as follows: • filling out a form or report related to one's duties by supplying appropriate words or phrases or writing a few comments • noting brief messages in a telegraphic style • listing a series of items or activities in an index or table of contents • writing titles, headings or filing cards in familiar work situations • writing brief notes, giving simple information • using model or form letters to deal with routine situations by filling in words or slightly adapting content.	**Intermediate Level** is the minimum level of second language ability in writing that should be identified for positions that involve writing short descriptive or factual texts in the second language. A person writing at this level has sufficient mastery of grammar and vocabulary to deal with explicit information on work-related topics. While the basic information is communicated, the writing will require some corrections in grammar and vocabulary as well as revision for style. Examples of some tasks which can be performed at the Intermediate Level of writing are as follows: • preparing short, routine administrative correspondence to request or give information, explanations or instructions • writing brief reports to explain or request that action be taken on work-related matters • writing an e-mail • filling in forms where brief written descriptions and comments are required • formulating observations or presenting conclusions • summarizing a text or a meeting in point or note form • preparing a simple factual information bulletin or directive • adapting texts such as model letters by adding a few words or slightly modifying the content.	**Advanced Level** is the minimum level of second language ability in writing that should be identified for positions that involve writing explanations or descriptions in a variety of informal and formal work-related situations. A person writing at this level can write texts in which the ideas are developed and presented in a coherent manner. The style of presentation and use of vocabulary, grammar and spelling are generally appropriate and require few corrections. Examples of some tasks which can be performed at the Advanced Level of writing are as follows: • writing correspondence or other texts in which detailed facts and reasons must be requested or given • drafting short reports, recommendations, information bulletins, research papers or summaries on particular work-related topics • preparing a summary of a meeting or document • making limited modifications or corrections to correspondence or other texts for meaning or tone.

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❒ *Oral Interaction*

BEGINNING LEVEL	INTERMEDIATE LEVEL	ADVANCED LEVEL
Beginning Level is the minimum level of second language ability in oral interaction that should be identified for positions that require simple and repetitive use of the language in routine work situations. A person at this level can ask and answer simple questions and give simple instructions or uncomplicated directions relating to routine work situations. However, communication may be difficult because a person speaking at this level makes many errors and has deficiencies in grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary and fluency. The person at this level may have problems in understanding speech spoken at a normal rate and repetitions may be required to understand what is being said. Examples of some tasks which can be performed at the Beginning Level of oral interaction are as follows: • asking and answering simple questions from colleagues or other employees about names, addresses, dates, times or numbers • making requests to colleagues or other employees and responding to such requests about simple and uncomplicated matters concerning supplies, files, equipment, documents or letters • giving and following simple directions about the location of people, places or things	**Intermediate Level** is the minimum level of second language ability in oral interaction that should be identified for positions that involve departure from routine or repetitive use of the language. A person at this level can sustain a conversation on concrete topics, report on actions taken, give straightforward instructions to employees and provide factual descriptions and explanations. While many errors and deficiencies in grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary and fluency may occur, these do not seriously interfere with communication. However, a person at this level should not be expected to cope with situations that are sensitive or that require the understanding or expression of subtle or abstract ideas. The ability to deal with situations involving hypothetical ideas and the use of persuasion is also limited. Examples of some tasks which can be performed at the Intermediate Level of oral interaction are as follows: • handling requests for routine information from other employees or members of the public (either by telephone or in face-to-face conversations) about such things as services, publications or competitions • participating in informal meetings or work sessions dealing with such matters as the assignment of work, steps to be followed, priorities or deadlines	**Advanced Level** is the minimum level of second language ability in oral interaction that should be identified for positions that require handling sensitive situations where the understanding and expression of subtle, abstract or complicated ideas is required or where unfamiliar work-related topics must be dealt with. A person at this level can support opinions and can understand and express hypothetical and conditional ideas. However, the ease and fluency of a native speaker is not required or expected. There may be errors and deficiencies in pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary, but such errors rarely interfere with communication. Examples of some tasks which can be performed at the Advanced Level of oral interaction are as follows: • giving and understanding explanations and descriptions that may involve complicated details, hypothetical questions or complex and abstract ideas • giving and understanding detailed accounts of events, actions taken or procedures to be followed • discussing or explaining policies, procedures, regulations, programs and services relating to an area of work • participating effectively in discussions that involve the rapid exchange of ideas

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BEGINNING LEVEL	INTERMEDIATE LEVEL	ADVANCED LEVEL
• giving and following instructions on uncomplicated matters about which work to do or whom to see.	• giving factual accounts to colleagues or investigators of actions taken or events that have occurred • giving and following instructions or explanations about how work is to be done, what information is needed and what steps or alternatives are to be followed.	• supporting opinions, defending a point of view or justifying actions in meetings or discussions with employees, colleagues or superiors • counselling and giving advice to employees or clients on sensitive or complex issues • participating in selection boards • making presentations, giving training courses or defending appeals • dealing with situations that require quick and accurate use of both languages in rapid succession (such as situations faced by a receptionist in a busy office).

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Council of Europe

The Council of Europe has developed a common framework that defines three broad bands (basic user, independent user and proficient user) and six levels of language competence.

The Basic User:

A1 Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

A2 Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g., very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.

The Independent User:

B1 Can understand the main points of clear, standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise while traveling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions, and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.

B2 Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialization. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue, giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.

The Proficient User:

C1 Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts and recognize implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organizational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.

C2 Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.

Source: The Nuffield Foundation: The Nuffield Languages Inquiry. *Languages: the next generation.* London, 2000, p. 29.

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APPENDIX C: POST-SECONDARY SECOND LANGUAGE COURSES FOR CREDIT PURPOSES

POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTION	LANGUAGE COURSES OFFERED
Northern Alberta	
Grande Prairie Regional College	French (Beginners', 1st and 2nd year) German (1st year)
Keyano College	French (Beginners') Cree (Beginners')
Athabasca University	Cree (Beginners') French (Beginners', 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th year) German (1st and 2nd year) Spanish (1st and 2nd year)
Central Alberta	
University of Alberta *(offers credit courses in 21 languages)*	Arabic (Beginners', 1st, 2nd and 3rd year) Chinese (Beginners', 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th year and graduate level) Cree (Beginners', 1st and 2nd year) Danish (Beginners', 1st year) French (Beginners', 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th year and graduate level) German (Beginners', 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th year and graduate level) Greek (Classical) (Beginners', 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th year and graduate level) Hebrew (Biblical as part of Religious Studies) Italian (Beginners', 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th year) Japanese (Beginners', 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th year) Korean (Beginners', 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th year) Latin (Beginners', 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th year and graduate level) Norwegian (Beginners', 1st year) Persian (Beginners', 1st year) Polish (Beginners', 1st, 2nd and 3rd year) Portuguese (Beginners', 1st, 2nd and 3rd year) Russian (Beginners', 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th year) Sanskrit (Introductory) Spanish (Beginners', 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and graduate level) Swedish (Beginners', 1st year) Tibetan (Introductory, 1st and 2nd year) Ukrainian (Beginners', 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th year and graduate level)
Grant MacEwan College	Chinese (Introductory) French (Introductory, 1st year) German (Introductory) Japanese (Introductory) Latin (Introductory) Spanish (Introductory)
Northern Alberta Institute of Technology	Bilingual Business Administration (French/English)
Concordia University College	Cree (Beginners') French (Beginners', 1st, 2nd and 3rd year) German (Beginners') Greek (Classical) (Introductory) Hebrew (Classical) (Introductory) Latin (Introductory)

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Central Alberta (continued)	
Augustana University College	French (Beginners', 1st, 2nd and 3rd year) German (Beginners', 1st, 2nd and 3rd year) Norwegian (Beginners', 1st, 2nd and 3rd year) Spanish (Beginners') Greek (Introductory) Latin (Introductory)
Red Deer College	French (Beginners', 1st, 2nd and 3rd year) Spanish (Beginners', 1st, 2nd and 3rd year)
Southern Alberta	
University of Calgary *offers credit courses in 13 languages*	Chinese (Beginners', 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th year) French (Beginners', 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th year and graduate level) German (Beginners', 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th year and graduate level) Greek (Classical) (Introductory, 1st year) Hindi (Introductory, 1st and 2nd year) Italian (Beginners', 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th year) Japanese (Beginners', 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th year and graduate level) Latin (Beginners', 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th year and graduate level) Russian (Beginners', 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th year and graduate level) Sanskrit (Introductory) Spanish (Beginners', 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th year and graduate level) Tibetan (Introductory, 1st year)
Mount Royal College	Chinese (Beginners', 1st year) French (Beginners, 1st year and 2nd year) German (Beginners', 1st year) Japanese (Beginners', 1st year) Spanish (Beginners, 1st and 2nd year)
University of Lethbridge *offers credit courses in 10 languages*	Blackfoot (Beginners', 1st year) Chinese (Beginners') Cree (Beginners', 1st year) Dutch (Introduction to Dutch Language and Culture) Summer School French (Beginners', 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th year) German (Beginners', 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th year) Greek (Introductory, 1st, 2nd and 3rd year) Hebrew (Introductory, 1st year) Japanese (Beginners', 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th year) Latin (Introductory) Spanish (Beginners', 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th year)
Medicine Hat College	French (Beginners', 1st year) Spanish (Beginners')

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APPENDIX D: COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS TERMS OF REFERENCE/FOCUS

COMMITTEES	MEMBERSHIP
Advisory Committee to Enhance Second Language Learning The Advisory Committee to Enhance Second Language Learning will provide advice and suggestions regarding: • long- and short-term needs related to second language learning • services to second language students and their parents • second language learning program needs • administration of second language education at the provincial level. The Advisory Committee to Enhance Second Language Learning will ensure that the project moves forward by: • reviewing the issues regarding decreases in second language enrollments identified by the project staff, and providing advice and input to validate the issues • providing advice and input to the Project Leader in regard to strategies designed to increase second language enrollments in the basic and adult learning systems that are developed and proposed by various working groups • providing advice and input to the Project Leader in regard to the capacity of the Alberta provincial learning systems (basic and adult) to provide enhanced second language program delivery • reviewing and providing input into the Project's reporting of recommendations and strategies • acting as key contacts with second language learning providers and clients interested in enhancing second language learning in Alberta.	Alberta School Boards Association College of Alberta School Superintendents Alberta Teachers' Association (member from the Intercultural and Second Languages Council) Alberta Home and School Councils' Association (Parent members to represent rural and urban Alberta) Universities Coordinating Council Council of Presidents of Colleges and Technical Institutes Edmonton Chamber of Commerce Northern Alberta Heritage Language Association Southern Alberta Heritage Language Association Canadian Parents for French Regrets: Alberta Forest Products Association Alberta Hotel Association
Departmental Steering Committee The Departmental Steering Committee will advise the Enhancing Second Language Learning Project on the following matters: • educational needs of second language students • issues related to governance, policies, program planning and development, implementation and evaluation • policies relating to second language programming • initiatives across Canada and in other countries where instruction is offered in second languages, in order to assess the relevance of these developments • nature and format of print materials, to promote awareness of the benefits and opportunities of second language learning.	Curriculum Branch, Alberta Learning Governance and Program Delivery Branch, Alberta Learning Aboriginal Services Branch, Alberta Learning Field Services Sector, Alberta Learning French Language Services Branch, Alberta Learning Learner Assessment Branch, Alberta Learning Learning and Teaching Resources Branch, Alberta Learning National and International Education Branch, Alberta Learning Communications Branch, Alberta Learning Public Institutions Branch, Alberta Learning Business Integration Branch, Alberta Learning

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WORKING GROUPS FOCUS	MEMBERSHIP
Basic Learning Marketing Strategy Working Group • Develop recommendations and strategies to increase senior high school second language course enrollment and completion rates, in the short term. • Review identified information needs of students, parents, teachers and counsellors/administrators in the basic learning system. • Recommend the nature and format of awareness-raising and promotional materials best suited for each target group. • Develop a basic learning marketing strategy designed to increase second language enrollments in the basic learning system in the long term, including the review of proposed promotional materials to be used. • Suggest strategies for partnering with business and the community to increase interest and participation in second language learning in Alberta.	Alberta Teachers' Association (teacher, administrator and counsellor) Communication Specialists from metro boards (Calgary School District No. 19 and Edmonton School District No. 7) College of Alberta School Superintendents Aspen View Regional Division No. 19 Lethbridge School District No. 51 Communications Branch, Alberta Learning Curriculum Branch, Alberta Learning Regrets: Industry/Business
Programming/Second Language Proficiency Working Group • Develop recommendations regarding provincial second language programming, including such issues as potential curriculum and resource development needs, instruction time and language policies. • Recommend target levels and mechanisms to determine student proficiency, optimum instruction time and program duration. • Identify programming challenges (e.g., availability of staff with second language expertise, identifying needs of students in rural communities regarding second language instruction).	Alberta Teachers' Association College of Alberta School Superintendents Association of Independent Schools and Colleges in Alberta Council of Vice-Presidents Academic Council of Senior Academic Officials Governance and Program Delivery Branch, Alberta Learning Learning Technologies Branch, Alberta Learning French Language Services Branch, Alberta Learning Aboriginal Services Branch, Alberta Learning Learner Assessment Branch, Alberta Learning Curriculum Branch, Alberta Learning Public Institutions Branch, Alberta Learning

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WORKING GROUPS FOCUS	MEMBERSHIP
Second Language Teacher Development Working Group • Review the staffing capacity for delivering enhanced second language programming, given the target of increasing course enrollments in the basic and adult learning systems. • Provide recommendations and advice to the Enhancing Second Language Learning Project regarding viable alternative delivery models for second language course enrollment and, in particular, the staffing and qualifications of teachers in the basic learning system. • Suggest strategies (e.g., incentives, partnerships with business and the community, visiting educators) to increase the pool of certificated second language teachers. • Develop guidelines in regard to the specific knowledge, skills and attributes (KSAs) required of teachers delivering successful second language programming. • Develop strategies to promote opportunities in the field of second language teaching.	University of Alberta University of Calgary University of Lethbridge Alberta Teachers' Association College of Alberta School Superintendents National and International Education Branch, Alberta Learning Teacher Development and Certification Branch, Alberta Learning Curriculum Branch, Alberta Learning Aboriginal Services Branch, Alberta Learning Public Institutions Branch, Alberta Learning
Funding Second Language Learning Working Group • Determine the funding requirements and challenges of identified programming directions and alternative delivery models. • Develop recommendations regarding the funding sources and potential partnerships that are needed to deliver enhanced provincial second language programming, considering potential curriculum, resource development and staffing needs. • Develop strategies to finance measures for ensuring that students achieve the recommended second language proficiency levels.	Alberta Teachers' Association College of Alberta School Superintendents Alberta School Boards Association Association of School Business Officials of Alberta Council of Vice-Presidents Academic Council of Senior Academic Officials French Language Services Branch, Alberta Learning Aboriginal Services Branch, Alberta Learning School Finance Branch, Alberta Learning Public Institutions Branch, Alberta Learning Business Integration Branch, Alberta Learning Learner Funding Branch, Alberta Learning

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WORKING GROUPS FOCUS	MEMBERSHIP
Second Language Learner Initiatives Working Group • Develop strategies to motivate individual language learners and teachers to improve second language proficiency levels (e.g., student and teacher bursaries and exchanges). • Recommend potential initiatives that encourage enhanced second language programming at the school and authority levels. • Identify potential long-term partnerships that may sustain such initiatives.	Alberta Teachers' Association College of Alberta School Superintendents Alberta School Boards Association Council of Vice-Presidents Academic Council of Senior Academic Officials National and International Education Branch, Alberta Learning Aboriginal Services Branch, Alberta Learning Business Integration Branch, Alberta Learning Learner Funding Branch, Alberta Learning

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APPENDIX E:

'What We Heard' About Enhancing Second Language Programming in Alberta

October 2001

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NOTE ON APPENDIX E

Appendix E outlines comments received as feedback to the draft discussion document, *Enhancing Second Language Programming in Alberta*. This feedback refers to the list of recommendations contained in the original document. The recommendations from that document were reviewed, revised and rearranged by the Advisory Committee into the current 35 recommendations as they appear in the main body of this report, *Enhancing Second Language Learning in Alberta*. Thus, the numbering and sequence of the recommendations in Appendix E is different from that in the main body of this report. However, the themes have not changed, except that the original theme of "Marketing" has been reorganized into "Raising Public Awareness." This should aid in comparison. The chart at the right provides a comparison of the old and new numbering.

CURRENT RECOMMENDATION NUMBER	ORIGINAL RECOMMENDATION NUMBER
1	24
2	25, 27, 28
3	29
4	31
5	1
6	2, 3
7	4
8	5
9	6
10	7, 8, 17
11	9
12	10
13	11
14	12
15	13
16	14
17	15
18	16
19	18, 21, 23
20	19
21	20
22	22
23	26
24	30
25	32
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34	41
35	42

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INTRODUCTION

Appendix E, *'What We Heard' About Enhancing Second Language Programming in Alberta*, is a summary of responses to recommendations outlined in Alberta Learning's draft discussion document, *Enhancing Second Language Programming in Alberta*. In June 2001, the draft discussion document was forwarded to the members of the Advisory Committee to Enhance Second Language Learning to elicit responses from their respective organizations.

Working Group members provided input in regard to each respective section, and edits or comments in regard to accuracy/clarification of the draft discussion document.

Alberta Learning branches/sectors provided feedback to their Departmental Steering Committee members:

Basic Learning Division, Adult Learning Division, Information and Strategic Services Division, System Information and Reporting Division, and Communications Branch

Advisory Committee members solicited feedback on the draft discussion document from the organization they represent:

Basic Learning partners:	Alberta School Boards Association, College of Alberta School Superintendents, Alberta Teachers' Association, Alberta Home and School Councils' Association
Adult Learning partners:	Universities Coordinating Council, Council of Presidents of Colleges and Technical Institutes
Second language stakeholders:	Canadian Parents for French, Northern Alberta Heritage Language Association, Southern Alberta Heritage Language Association
Business:	Edmonton Chamber of Commerce

The recommendations contained within the discussion document focused on a number of topics and themes:

A. Programming/Second Language Proficiency
   - Theme 1: Making the Best of What We Have
   - Theme 2: Responding to Globalization
   - Theme 3: Consolidation/Integration
   - Theme 4: Access
   - Theme 5: Learner Assessment
   - Theme 6: Review

B. Teacher Development
C. Learner Initiatives
D. Marketing
E. Funding

Background contextual information was provided in the draft discussion document to assist the reader in understanding each recommendation.

Part I introduces the comments provided by organizations represented on the Advisory Committee to Enhance Second Language Learning, and provides comments in the words of the respondents by topic and theme.

Part II is a synopsis of key issues identified as being of paramount importance based on these submissions.

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PART I

The reactions to the draft discussion document were positive. The Universities Coordinating Council stated, "We are impressed by the way in which input from the working groups has been integrated into the discussion document." The Canadian Parents for French noted, "This report will have an immeasurable influence on the Second Language Learning in Alberta" and "is a welcome shot in the arm for Second Language Learning in Alberta." Mount Royal College observed that the discussion document "is based on a solid pedagogical approach to second language learning," and that "It responds to the needs of a wide variety of communities (both geographical and academic) which are to be found in Alberta today." The Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA) sought "to commend Alberta Learning for launching the project that is examining ways of increasing enrollments in second languages." The Association added, "It is also commendable that Alberta Learning has recognized that an examination of the capacity of the education system to deliver enhanced second language programs is necessary."

The Alberta Teachers' Association appreciated the document on Enhancing Second Language Programming in Alberta:

> The Association is supportive of the government initiative to enhance second language learning in Alberta … . The recognition of languages in the preparation of students for citizenship in a global society goes beyond the use of language as an economic tool for international trade, but speaks also to the value of the many mother tongue languages spoken in this province … .

The Alberta School Boards Association made reference to its policies that demonstrated support for second language instruction. The Alberta Home and School Councils' Association supported elements of their response to the draft document by referring to several of their existing Resolutions.

While the reaction to the draft discussion document was generally positive, some shortcomings of the document were mentioned. The Alberta Home and School Councils' Association (AHSCA) noted some inconsistencies of language usage. For example, within the document the distinction (if any) between partial immersion and full immersion was not always apparent. The Alberta School Boards Association had initial reservations about the project timelines and the limited consultation that had been possible but appreciated the modifications that were made to the timeline. Mount Royal College felt that there was a need for discussion of a practical connection between those involved in K–12 education, on the one hand, and post-secondary institutions, on the other, and that "The majority of the recommendations in the discussion document are specific to the K–12 community." The College also felt that input from the various disciplines, such as history and the humanities, would convey a stronger message as well as "comments and recommendations from interested members of the general public, and especially the business community."

The Canadian Parents for French stated that the report, "strives to appear neutral towards other second languages," adding,

> We believe that this has the effect of according French the same status as other languages … . The report must recognize the special status of French within Canada … . The Report fails to recognize the importance of French as a truly global language and fails to underscore its importance for international trade, thereby minimizing its usefulness as a language worth studying.

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Another concern of the Canadian Parents for French was that

> the report does not specifically state that French Second Language learning should be funded by the provincial AND the federal governments. We believe that the need for transparency requires that this be explicitly stated. Since there is confusion about the roles of the province and the federal government in funding French Second Language learning, the Report should leave no room for doubt as to what it recommends.

Feedback specific to the Introduction of the draft discussion document was referred to in several responses. The Alberta School Boards Association expressed "some reservations regarding Alberta Learning's business plan goal of increasing the percentage of high school students who take second languages from 23.5% to 29% by 2003 and 33% by 2005." The Association felt that the targets were established with minimal input and appear to be quite arbitrary. The need to clearly determine the purpose(s) of second language learning and the emphasis on short-term targets concerned the Association. The discussion document's reasons for low enrollment, that is, competing interests and scheduling difficulties affecting second language learning, were considered valid. The recruitment and retention of second language teachers are key factors that boards view as inhibiting second language instruction.

The Alberta Home and School Councils' Association mentioned the issue of lack of access to second language programming, particularly in rural school jurisdictions. The Association stated that efforts to ensure that rural students are at no discernible disadvantage to their urban counterparts in terms of either access or quality are required to increase second language programming opportunities.

The Alberta Teachers' Association expressed a concern that there was no costing of programs referred to in the draft discussion document.

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A. Programming/Second Language Proficiency

Theme 1: Making the Best of What We Have (Recommendations #1–6)

The feedback reflected general agreement with the six recommendations that make up this section of the discussion paper, with the exception of Recommendation #3.

The Alberta Teachers' Association responded in general terms to the theme's recommendations. They noted

> that as program offerings continue to increase, the feasibility for school jurisdictions and individual schools to offer all the language programs requested by some parents creates difficulties. Although increased parent demand for instruction in a variety of second languages would be an encouraging sign that society values second languages, the practical problems in meeting those demands need to be considered. As such, a significant portion of beginner level instruction should emphasize the transferability of language learning skills. In that context, while the availability of a variety of programs in Kindergarten to Grade 6 might be quite limited, children should be exposed to a second language as part of their basic education at all levels even though further study may be in a language for which programs of study exist only in Grades 7 to 9 or 10 to 12. As indicated in the section "Making the Best of What We Have" school jurisdictions and schools should encourage students to study a second language at all levels and at all entry points.

The Alberta School Boards Association, while they agreed with Recommendation #1, noted that, "boards will either approve the offerings of their schools or set policy guiding those selections." As a consequence of this reminder, the document will be edited accordingly.

The Alberta Home and School Councils' Association recognizes the use of the word "encourage" in Recommendation #2. The Association suggested that this recommendation would need to be addressed in the long term. Calling upon senior high school students to start and complete at least one second language program in Grades 10, 11 and 12 is difficult. Current realities of limited access and funding for such programs reflect potential inequity concerns in rural schools.

The Alberta School Boards Association disagreed with Recommendation #3. The Association stated that,

> This recommendation implies that it would be compulsory for students who begin to study a language to complete it. This changes the entire premise of junior high complementary courses, which are primarily exploratory in nature. This change should not be made without a review of secondary programming that examines the overall wisdom of the change.

The Alberta Home and School Councils' Association believed that the current Recommendation #3 should be reworded, as "access to second language instruction in rural schools can be inconsistent at best." They suggested that more appropriate wording would be "students currently learning a second language at the secondary school level be given every opportunity or be encouraged to complete the 30-level outcomes of the second language program being taken."

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The Alberta School Boards Association, in agreeing with Recommendation #5, commented that the recommendation

> underscores the importance generally of determining the purposes of second language learning and of communicating realistic program outcome expectations to students, the business community and the public. Some members of the business community believe that the learning of a second language is an economic imperative in a global economy.
>
> Students must acquire highly advanced levels before they would be able to function in business/trading contexts. This may be impossible for most students to attain with the system of basic education.

Recommendation #6 was supported, but the Alberta School Boards Association noted that "these resources must include appropriate distance learning materials." The Alberta Home and School Councils' Association provided a copy of *Resolution 99C-25 Requirements of Implementation of New Curricula*, which they felt would assist in the realization of this recommendation.

> *AHSCA Resolution 99C-25 REQUIREMENTS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW CURRICULA:*
> *"WE URGE THAT*
> *Alberta Education follow these requirements regarding the implementation of new curriculum:*
> 1. *Draft program and resources are evaluated through a pilot project,*
> 2. *Approved programs and resources are available at least eight months prior to implementation,*
> 3. *Sufficient funding is available for teacher inservice and purchase of approved resources.*

The Alberta Teachers' Association had reservations about Recommendation #6. The Association noted that "Although the goal of developing a number of programs to meet heritage language as well as trading needs is laudable, it may be necessary to focus resources on fewer programs to ensure their effective implementation."

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Theme 2: Responding to Globalization (Recommendations #7–10)

There was general agreement in the acceptance of Recommendations #7–10.

The Southern and Northern Alberta Heritage Language Associations (SAHLA and NAHLA), while supporting Recommendations #7 and #8, suggested that "Alberta Learning should also include other target languages that are needed, and should develop each of these six year plans in the short-term and NOT wait until the long-term."

Responses to these recommendations suggested that several of them are initiatives that are currently underway.

The Canadian Parents for French believed that the discussion paper "fails to recognize the importance of French as a truly global language …". They noted that international institutions such as the UN, NATO, OECD and International Red Cross use French as a language of communication, and that French is also the dominant working language of the European Court of Justice. "French is not only an Official Language of Canada it is a major tool of the international market place and of major international institutions." The CPF indicated that "if global trade is driving this Report then let's give French its proper place in the hierarchy."

The College of Alberta School Superintendents was supportive of Recommendation #9. They recognized "the importance of having students experience the culture surrounding the second language and not simply the language aspects. Travel experience should be a part of such programs."

The Alberta Teachers' Association supported "the concept of long-term student exchanges as identified in Recommendation #10. However, credit allocation should reflect specific language acquisition and cultural awareness as evaluated by the school before credits are allocated."

Red Deer College (RDC), in its response to Recommendation #10, recognized that "Transfer agreements have to be revisited and become more consistent, e.g., one post-secondary institution may accept one course while another won't recognize it."

Mount Royal College was strongly in favour of recommendations "which recognize and encourage students to participate in exchanges and work experiences in other parts of the world."

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Theme 3: Consolidation/Integration (Recommendations #11–15)

There was general agreement with Recommendations #11–15.

Recommendation #11 was generally acceptable but the respondents agreed that some additional factors will need to be in place for it to work successfully. In the view of some respondents, the issue of proficiency levels and instructional time is limited. Such responses suggest that "proficiency levels tied to curriculum expectations, MUST have an instructional time requirement" (minimum mandated time). The recommendation is also seen as having the potential to help articulation between secondary and post-secondary institutions.

For example, the Alberta Teachers' Association response reflected this general agreement, with caution about the recommendation.

> Part of the long-term success of second language programs is based on realistic expectations of what level of proficiency might be achieved given the appropriate conditions of student motivation, length of study, adequate resources and teachers with the required methodology and ability to speak the target language. We support the recommendations leading to the development of a common set of language proficiency levels in the Alberta context and a clear understanding for students, parents and community of what can be achieved.

There was general agreement with Recommendation #12. The Universities Coordinating Council stated that "computer-mediated pedagogies in second language education offer much promise and are a part of the educational environment in the universities of Alberta." The Council has recommended that Athabasca University be the site of a Centre for Innovative Education. If such a centre is established, second language education could be encouraged to be a Centre priority. The Alberta Learning ICT curriculum could also support second language instruction.

Recommendation #13 was seen as offering an opportunity for heritage language schools to align their curricular expectations with those created within the Western Canadian Protocol. This would assure consistent standards within language programming.

Red Deer College generally supported Recommendation #14. The College recognized that "efficient use of limited financial and human resources" is essential. They also had a "CONCERN" in terms of "support from Alberta Learning."

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The Native Student Centre at the University of Calgary stated that,

> Recommendation #14 is very important as partnerships are crucial for post-secondary institutions that are offering Aboriginal languages. It is important that Aboriginal post-secondary institutions are contracted or included in a meaningful way in the development of language courses/programs in public post-secondary institutions. These partnerships are important for three reasons: 1) transferability of the courses taken, 2) recognition of community expertise, 3) consistency in instruction and curriculum.

Some of the respondents suggested that Recommendation #15 is already happening in some secondary schools. The Alberta Home and School Councils' Association was concerned that rural schools do not necessarily have the same access to businesses using different languages as do those in urban settings. This raised the issue of equity.

Red Deer College noted that "Typically, students coming from a 10–20–30 background DO NOT have sufficient competencies to be functionally capable to work in that language."

Theme 4: Access (Recommendations #16–17)

Respondents generally agreed with both of the recommendations, but a number of comments were made.

Recommendation #16

The Alberta School Boards Association recognized that "Alternative delivery may help to enhance student programs in second languages. However, distance learning is viewed as 'second choice' and there is widespread skepticism that it can be as effective as face-to-face contact with a language competent teacher ...."

The Alberta Teachers' Association observed that,

> Although access to second language programs would ideally be through direct teacher–student interaction, we recognize the need for alternate delivery models at Grades 10 to 12 and post-secondary levels when direct face-to-face instruction is not available. The ability of students to benefit from these in a second language would be greatly enhanced for those who have studied a second language such as French in a Kindergarten to Grade 6 or Grade 7 to 9 classroom.

The Alberta Home and School Councils' Association felt that alternative delivery could promote "rural student access to second language programming, provided alternative delivery modes teach students to the same provincial standard of proficiency as programs delivered in more traditional formats."

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The College of Alberta School Superintendents agreed with Recommendations #16 and #17. Regarding Recommendation #16, the College stated, "There is strong support for the development of quality distance learning materials. Online interactive delivery is essential for second language development/acquisition."

Recommendation #17 was also accepted with some reservations.

The Alberta School Boards Association observed,

> It is assumed that "comprehensive distance learning materials" means full course learning packages. Boards are skeptical regarding whether the curriculum repository concept currently being developed in Alberta Learning will do the job effectively. Teachers do not have the time, and some may not have the expertise, to take a collection of "digitized learning objects" and construct full course materials. ASBA suggests that Alberta Learning consider the contract mode of development as one means of developing these resources.

Some concern about the low quality of distance learning materials was expressed. It was also mentioned that "materials that can support both students and teachers, whether students are or are not registered in distance learning must be developed."

The question of access to second language programming was a major concern for Red Deer College. The College mentioned that "electronic delivery does not promote good, efficient language acquisition when it comes to listening and particularly, speaking skills. We should not rely exclusively on distance and online delivery for language instruction."

The Native Student Centre at the University of Calgary considered Recommendations #16 and #17 to be important in the application of Aboriginal languages. Regarding Recommendation #17, the Centre stated that,

> The integration of technology is a highly important tool in the dissemination and instruction of Aboriginal languages. The development of computerized program, like CD–ROMs and Web sites, can address and integrate the oral nature of the languages and can be broadly adopted in the classrooms and on the Internet in distance learning delivery.

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Theme 5: Learner Assessment (Recommendations #18–23)

There was general approval of all the recommendations in the Learner Assessment category. Comments were made concerning several of the recommendations.

The Southern and Northern Alberta Heritage Language Associations felt that when considering Recommendation #18 "Alberta Learning should include current and FUTURE language programs when developing assessment standard and assessment materials."

Red Deer College succinctly noted that they were "All for it" in their response to Recommendation #18.

The Alberta Teachers' Association noted that "The use of student portfolios to demonstrate language skills could enhance the importance young people place on their language abilities."

The Southern and Northern Alberta Heritage Language Associations noted that "Alberta Learning should take into consideration the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act when developing the provincial portfolio program. Alberta Learning could develop criteria, and students could provide examples of written/oral work."

Red Deer College's response to Recommendation #19 was that "Students are encouraged (sometimes required) to develop a portfolio. A 'language portfolio' could become a part of a student's 'complete' portfolio."

The Alberta School Boards Association had comments concerning Recommendation #20. The Association felt that

> Alberta Learning needs to relate levels of competency attainment to the purpose(s) for learning a second language. If the certificates are to apply to basic learning, Alberta Learning needs to cooperate with school boards and other stakeholders in basic education as well as with post-secondary institutions.

Recommendation #20 was supported by Alberta Home and School Councils' Association's resolution 98C-7:

> *AHSCA Resolution 98C-7 CREDIT FOR IMMERSION/BILINGUAL CERTIFICATE:*
>
> *WHEREAS Students in the Immersion or Bilingual program have taken instruction through a second language in school for a minimum 11 years/maximum 13 years. This extra expertise gained by their participation in their chosen program needs to be recognized. Through an additional certificate, provincial recognition of the bilingual education achieved by Alberta students following the Alberta Education Program of Studies would be realized and understood globally.*
>
> *THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that AHSCA urge Alberta Education to issue an additional certificate to graduating Grade 12 students who have achieved a minimum of 30 credits, of which 10 credits were earned at the 30 level, through the Immersion/Bilingual experience.*

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The College of Alberta School Superintendents stressed the importance of Recommendation #20. The College felt that "articulating high school courses and credits with post-secondary requirements is still an issue." A reminder that "we do not want another Applied Math 30 debacle do we?" was provided.

In response to Recommendation #21, the Alberta Teachers' Association supported the "development by Alberta Learning of assessment standards for language proficiency in oral, listening, reading, written and cultural understanding that are based on clearly defined proficiency levels."

The Native Student Centre at the University of Calgary raised an important issue about Recommendation #21. The Centre brought to the attention of the committee that

> many Aboriginal languages remain oral in nature. This raises issues with regards to measuring proficiency levels for learners and for teachers by applying "western" written standards to languages that are primarily oral by nature. This has always presented a bit of a dilemma in the institutionalization of Aboriginal Languages.

Recommendation #22 elicited the following comment from the Alberta School Boards Association: "School boards, in addition to post-secondary institutions, can (some already do) provide assessment services to evaluate students' proficiency in second languages."

Red Deer College supported the response of the Alberta School Boards Association to Recommendation #22 when they noted that "This already exists to some extent (at RDC and probably other post-secondary institutions ...."

Theme 6: Review (Recommendations #24–29)

This section created a number of varied responses, so recommendations are dealt with individually when appropriate.

Recommendation #24

The Alberta Teachers' Association

> supports a broadly based education for all students. In that context, we [the Alberta Teachers' Association] encourage the direction taken in Recommendation No 24, which we believe should lead to making a second language a required part of each student's basic learning program. The question is not if but when and how such a requirement should be introduced. The feasibility study should help determine additional measures to be taken to ensure that the program can be provided given the ensuing increase in enrollment.

The Alberta Home and School Councils' Association stated, "It must be considered whether mandatory language programs adequately reflect the principle of parental choice."

The Alberta School Boards Association agreed with the recommendations but had the following comments:

- The ASBA believes in the importance of second language learning and therefore supports serious exploration of the feasibility of compulsory second languages. Prior to any consideration being given to making second language learning compulsory, the following issues must be addressed:

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- the purpose(s) of second language learning, and the levels of proficiency required to achieve the purpose(s),
- the adequacy of teacher supply required to implement high quality second language programs,
- regional equity and the need for delivery supports such as appropriate distance learning course packages and related activities such as summer learning camps,
- the senior high school "credit crunch" and the need for a review of Diploma requirements and the requirements for entry to post-secondary institutions,
- the need to consider exemptions for some categories of students, and
- the need to inform the public of the values of second language learning.

The Universities Coordinating Council concurred with the idea of "further exploration of making second-language learning a requirement. Such a requirement would do much to advance the agenda of Alberta Learning's internationalization plan."

Recommendation #25

The Alberta School Boards Association stated,

> The review should also examine the entry requirements of post-secondary institutions, especially universities. Entry requirements of most post-secondary institutions do not include the attainment of a high school diploma, but do include many courses not required for the diploma.

The Alberta Teachers' Association "is currently urging the government to conduct a second education review", and commented that,

> In the context of the importance to be given to second languages at all levels, the Kindergarten to Grade 12 basic learning program must be reviewed with the view of accommodating the time required for second language learning. Second language learning cannot be presented as an add-on to an already heavy program of studies, but must be integrated into a revised program that reflects its role in basic education.

The Alberta Home and School Councils' Associated noted,

> Current issues of access/equity urge caution in recommending a high school second language diploma requirement in the short term until such time as these issues can be adequately addressed. There is, however, considerable merit to the long term recommendation for a specialized diploma; allowing students to specialize during their high school career better reflects the principles of lifelong learning than does the current generalist approach to education … .

The response from Red Deer College was initially a question: "Would a bilingual Kindergarten program be considered (English/French)?" They added a justification for the question, "This would give the parents/children the opportunity to determine whether to send the child to FR [French] immersion or English instruction."

Recommendation #26

Red Deer College stated that, "when attending post-secondary and taking second language in college (our experience and probably in university), those students who challenged courses (very often the 30-level) experience great difficulty in university-level courses."

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Recommendation #27

The Alberta Home and School Councils' Association recognized that the recommendation was contingent on Recommendation #25. Concern was expressed that the recommendation "assumes access to second language programming for rural students will be assured and consistent."

Red Deer College noted when considering time allocation that "This is currently the case in our institution entry level (beginners) students receive 5×50mins of instruction per week, first and second year university receive 4×50mins."

The Alberta School Boards Association disagreed with the recommendation: "This type of recommendation should not be made without the review of programming attended to in #25. Indeed, it would not currently be possible at the senior high school level." They went on to suggest that "School boards (not schools) have the authority to determine subject area time allocations based on local needs and priorities at the elementary and junior high school level."

Recommendation #28

The Alberta School Boards Association disagreed with Recommendation #28:

> School boards (not schools) have the authority to implement programs and to determine time allocations.
>
> Alberta Learning should publish research related to time requirements for various levels of proficiency, and leave programming decisions to boards.

The University of Calgary had a basic concern about the Review section of Programming/Second Language Proficiency. The University stated,

> The *optional* nature of the reforms (recommendations #24–28) and of second language education in general in this province also raises questions about the likely success of the educational system in turning around the current situation of low enrollments and completion rates. "Encouraging" language learning is difficult to accomplish if the high school timetable leaves little room for students to take language courses around their required subjects. Effectively quadrupling the number of students taking languages in the school system implies substantial new funding and would require sufficient lead time to develop the resources and personnel to deliver the new and expanded programs.

Recommendation #29

The Alberta School Boards Association disagreed with the recommendation, saying that

- post-secondary entry requirements should be reviewed in conjunction with a review of secondary school programs and Diploma requirements. This process should all be open to public and stakeholder input.
- the recommendation appears to imply that post-secondary entry requirements include second languages. If so, this is not the only or necessarily the most desirable scenario. Post-secondary entry requirements in other subject areas, e.g., mathematics, also need to be reviewed to determine their effect on student choices in senior high school.

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The Native Student Centre at the University of Calgary, considered Recommendation #29 to be of "the utmost importance." In their response they observed that

> most post-secondary institutions are currently ill equipped to measure proficiency of the smaller pockets of Aboriginal languages (with exception, of Cree and Blackfoot). Students who are orally fluent in an Aboriginal language that is still primary oral in nature are at a loss for recognition from post-secondary institutions who require the student to demonstrate written fluency and who lack assessment tools. This is where partnerships with the Aboriginal community schools and band councils are vital. Policies and procedures need to be established in order that these students are given recognition for the level of fluency, and the assessment tools used to measure proficiency need to take into consideration the current state of the language itself with respect to its oral and written state.

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B. Teacher Development (Recommendations #30–32)

The Alberta School Boards Association disagreed with the intent of Recommendation #30. They stated,

- It is desirable and it should be encouraged for teachers to have a level of language proficiency greater than the level they are instructing. Care must be taken not to introduce a variety of certification requirements which may be impossible to administer. This item needs review and input by COATS [Council on Alberta Teaching Standards].
- There is no evident basis for requiring administrators to have the same knowledge as all of their teachers. This would be an unrealistic requirement to impose.

The Alberta Teachers' Association supported Recommendation #30 in that it "recognizes the role adequately prepared teachers will play in the successful implementation of second language programs. Teachers must have the necessary language skill and appropriate knowledge of second language methodology to successfully implement the programs."

The Southern and Northern Alberta Heritage Language Associations believe that "Alberta Learning should introduce a specialized component to teachers (i.e., intensive training in pedagogy) to instruct all classes."

The University of Calgary was in agreement with Recommendation #30. They stated, "The specification of the minimum proficiency level of second language teachers as at least an Intermediate level, and encouragement for administrators to develop minimum Intermediate proficiency level, are most welcome." They noted "that focusing on learners is not possible unless teachers are well versed in intellectual disciplines and relevant pedagogies, attaining a certifiable level of mastery."

In responding to Recommendation #31, the Alberta School Boards Association stated,

> This is a highly important recommendation that must be given priority. Boards recognize that the capacity to deliver high quality language programs is conditional on the availability of well trained teachers, and that the present supply in this area is not adequate.

The Alberta Teachers' Association recognized "the need to increase the supply of qualified teachers." The Association cautioned that strategies such as providing "professional tax relief for professional expenses, etc., not be limited to second language teachers."

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The Native Student Centre at the University of Calgary recognized that Recommendation #31 requires that, "Public Institutions need to be flexible in recognizing expertise in the instruction of Aboriginal Languages." They noted that,

> In the case of Aboriginal teachers, required teaching credentials have become a barrier to the dissemination of these languages. Some of the primary fluent speakers of the languages in their pure state do not read or write the language, and do not have a B. Ed. or Masters.

The Alberta Teachers' Association suggested that a strategy of consideration within Recommendation #32 is that school jurisdictions offer incentives such as "additional professional development opportunities, as well as support/consultant services in second languages."

The Universities Coordinating Council noted that,

> A challenge may well be recruiting students into these teacher-education programs in our universities: the shortage of teachers of French in Alberta is well known, but despite that, we are not attracting large numbers of students into programs designed to produce teachers of French in the K–12 system. If we are having problems with French, will we have similar problems with, say, Mandarin and Spanish?

The Universities Coordinating Council also emphasized that,

> Post degree credentialling of properly educated language teachers should focus both on already-accredited teachers who need to upgrade their proficiency in a language or in several languages, and also on people already equipped with a degree in a modern language, or competence in a relevant language, who need to be trained as language teachers. We are ready to provide the professional upgrading necessary in either instance.

In responding to Teacher Development, the College of Alberta School Superintendents considered "teachers' needs, education and fluency" to be "key components" in second language programming, and felt that "Finding qualified and certified staff to teach the courses will be a challenge." The College recognized that "rural jurisdictions will be faced with the difficulty of hiring qualified language teachers."

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C. Learner Initiatives (Recommendations #33–37)

The Alberta Home and School Councils' Association supported Recommendation #33 but noted that monetary support will be required to ensure access for all students, not just those who are able to demonstrate financial need.

The response from the Southern and Northern Alberta Heritage Language Associations was very specific regarding Recommendations #34 and #35. In approving the recommendations, the two Associations focused on their "possible" role in the provision of second language learning opportunities by community language associations. They suggested that

> the Alberta Ministry of Learning revamp criteria that would recognize the important role and contribution that the Southern and Northern Alberta Heritage Language Associations play in the Enhancing Second Language Learning Project, as the professional coordinating umbrella body for community based language schools, by providing commitment and funding to SAHLA and NAHLA in addition to community schools.

They recommended that "this grant include financial support, encouragement and commitment from Alberta Learning to the umbrella coordinating organizations, NAHLA and SAHLA, in addition to the community language schools."

The Associations suggested that they would focus on six primary areas:

1. Increasing Community language and cultural school awareness and understanding of the Enhancing Second Language Learning Project and the important role of NAHLA/SAHLA and community schools in the plan.
2. Curriculum development and framework
3. Teacher training and professional development
4. Student success, language proficiency and cultural understanding
5. School and classroom management
6. Promotion of language learning and intercultural understanding as a core component of basic education, and recognition of students who study languages at school board and community levels.

The College of Alberta School Superintendents had some reservations about Recommendation #36. The College noted that "Ongoing professional development and inservicing of teachers is a need that will put pressure on school jurisdictions. Any expansion of second language instruction should address funding for ongoing teacher development."

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The Alberta School Boards Association, while agreeing with Recommendation #37, had the following comments:

- ASBA would not support an initiative that results in cumbersome and costly approval structures and processes.
- Innovation and equity must be linked (as in the present AISI model).
- Boards should have flexibility to use funding in ways that fit their local circumstances, e.g., if funds are available for exchanges, but exchanges are impossible to arrange in a local area, it should be legitimate for a board to divert these funds to a support that is more feasible for that area, such as summer language camps.

The Alberta Teachers' Association response was supportive of Recommendations #33–37. The Association supported

> the numerous initiatives for all second language learners in basic and adult learning, at the community level and for teachers/instructors. Although international experiences for students are welcomed, many school districts have limited student opportunities to travel abroad. Alberta Learning would need to address this issue in collaboration with school districts. We welcome also the recognition of programs for teachers as lifelong learners, and the need for programs to assist school jurisdictions. Sufficient funding must be provided to allow for these programs.

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D. Marketing (Recommendation #38)

There were a variety of responses to Recommendation #38.

Alberta School Boards Association disagreed with the recommendation. They suggested that

- Alberta Learning needs to more clearly determine the purposes for second language learning prior to the initiation of a marketing strategy.
- Marketing strategies should be aimed at increasing the overall societal knowledge of the importance of second language learning. Care must be taken not to create unrealistic expectations regarding potential student proficiency levels, or to entice students to enroll in programs that are either not available to them or will not enable them to gain entry to post-secondary programs of choice.

The Alberta Teachers' Association had concerns about Recommendation #38, given the provincial, national and international milieus that serve as background for the recommendation. The Association observed that

> marketing strategies must go well beyond targeting students currently enrolled in second language courses and Grade 9 students entering high school. The marketing strategies must challenge Alberta society to value minority groups, to value cultural diversity and languages as a vehicle for greater understanding. It is in this context that the introduction of second languages for trading purposes should be introduced.

The Southern and Northern Alberta Heritage Language Associations had the following suggestion:

> That the Alberta Ministry of Learning places a greater emphasis on providing financial support to operate language programs for younger students. It is relatively easy to convince an elementary parent vs. a high school parent because of academic and time restraints. As long as the Ministry champions language everything else will follow. When marketing language learning to Albertans, Alberta Learning should include community based language schools as a valuable component of language learning in the province.

Mount Royal College noted that the recommendation speaks of links to the business community. The College observed that "the benefits of collaboration cannot be realized without additional resources being made available."

The College of Alberta School Superintendents stated, "A big concern is the marketing plan and the research that precedes it."

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E. Funding (Recommendations #39–42)

Recommendation #39 was strongly supported by the Alberta Home and School Councils' Association, but the Alberta School Boards Association disagreed.

The Alberta Home and School Councils' Association noted that this recommendation is strongly supported by both parent opinion and the AHSCA. Increased funding would do much to alleviate discrepancies in both access to and quality of second language programs between rural and urban schools. Additional funding will enhance second language programming in rural schools where enrollment numbers often do not provide adequate resources for schools to be able to offer more than the current minimum. Without increased financial support, rural students remain at a decided disadvantage.

The Alberta School Boards' Association disagreed with the recommendation.

- It is not clear what is meant by the principle of "sustainability." If it means that any grant structures that are introduced can be depended upon to remain in place for foreseeable futures, ASBA agrees. If it means that there would be per pupil or credit grants in excess of those available for other programs on a continuing basis, ASBA disagrees. ASBA supports the availability of "program start up grants" but [does] not support long-term incentive funding of an earmarked nature.
- ASBA believes that boards should be supported through basic instructional grants equivalent to those for other subjects (per pupil and CEU), as well as grants to support extraordinary costs such as those for student exchanges and teacher bursaries.

The Alberta School Boards' Association agreed with Recommendation #41 but noted that "the meaning of "additional implementation costs" was not clear. If it meant "program start up grants," ASBA agreed. If it meant that there would be per pupil or credit grants in excess of those available for other programs on a continuing basis, ASBA disagreed (see ASBA response to Recommendation #39 above).

The Alberta Home and School Councils' Association showed their support of this recommendation by providing a copy of AHSCA Resolution 99C-26 New Curricula In-service, which states:

AHSCA Resolution 99C-26 NEW CURRICULA IN-SERVICE:

BECAUSE *the Alberta curricula continues to change and specific knowledge and skills are required to teach this new curricula,*

AND BECAUSE *regional consortia is the most economical and efficient method of providing in-service opportunities,*

WE REQUEST THAT Alberta Education develop and fund a comprehensive in-service program, which includes regional consortium support, for the implementation of each provincially prescribed program of studies.

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Mount Royal College welcomed recommendations for increased funding for second language learning. They strongly supported

> recommendations that the Government of Alberta increase funding for institutions offering new and innovative second language programs, teacher training, student exchanges and work experience abroad. These can be in the form of regular funding, one-time Access funding for innovative new programs, and bursaries and scholarships for students who participate in study and work terms abroad.

The Alberta Teachers' Association wished to "stress the importance" of "the provision of adequate additional funds to introduce these programs." The Association noted that

> sufficient funds must be made available for each language that is to be implemented. Teacher development, program and learner development funds must be made available to each language being introduced. If resources are too limited, none will be properly implemented. We would therefore support a gradual phase-in of additional language programs in a systematic way to ensure the proper implementation and resources for each.

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PART II

Challenges

Respondents to the draft discussion document *Enhancing Second Language Programming in Alberta* have identified a number of challenges.

The following topics and challenges appear to be of paramount importance to stakeholders.

Program Requirements

Topic:	Challenges:
• The purposes of second language learning must be clearly stated.	– defining clearly the why of learning languages and proficiency level in terms of learner need – taking into consideration child development and language acquisition – ensuring the general public are "well informed"
• Levels of language proficiency give rise to various questions.	– Who determines the proficiency levels? – How are they measured?
• Teacher supply must be ensured.	– attracting and retaining qualified second language teachers – teachers' qualifications and teacher preparation
• Implementation support is needed.	– timeliness of curriculum – adequate teacher and learner resources
• Provincial equity of programming must be ensured.	– rural and urban – small high schools
• The suggestion of a mandatory second language program gives rise to a number of issues.	– redefining high school diploma and graduation requirements – the "credit crunch" in high school – impact on elementary and junior high schools – establishment of mandatory minimum instruction time requirement (K–12) – exemption of students from mandatory programs based on special circumstances – articulation
• The definition of basic education must be examined.	– second language courses and programs as core or option – exemptions to accommodate individual learners

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Program Focus

- There are currently a number of different language courses and programs.
  Which language(s) should be the provincial focus?
  - French (Official Language)
  - First Nations
  - International Languages of Trade
  - Heritage Languages
- A priority framework should be determined.
  What languages should receive priority for
  - provincial curriculum
  - learner and teacher resources [print, multi-media, online]
  - learner supports such as exchanges and work placements
- Enrollment information provides guidance in determining language priorities.
  - high school students have many demands on their time/conflicting priorities
  - enrollments are increasing in a number of languages (e.g. Spanish)

Additional challenges were identified in the following areas.

Learner Assessment

- Having proficiency levels recognized at national and international levels
- Proficiency framework (portfolio)
- Provincial quality control (e.g., Grade 9 Achievement Test, Diploma Exam)
- Course challenge

Funding

- No differentiated grant rates (no preferential treatment to second language instruction)
- Support provision (e.g., bursaries, teacher and student exchanges)
- Funding guidelines and priorities
- Funding should not be an unnecessary complication or hindrance

Distance Learning

- not the 'panacea'
- helpful "fallback" that requires specialized interaction; e.g., summer camps, exchanges
- provides support materials to instruction
- need for high-quality resources

Marketing

- Caution was advised in using the term marketing, which has negative connotations, and which may give rise to expectations that might not be achievable.

In light of the above challenges, the following recommendations received the most discussion feedback.

Recommendations where disagreement existed:
#3, #27, #28, #29, #30, #34, #35, #38, #39

Recommendations where agreement with substantive comments existed:
#1, #2, #5, #6, #11, #15, #16, #17, #20, #22, #24, #25, #31, #37, #41

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